

vicinity of the house live several other mongrels. None of them has ever exhibited the peculiar reaction to the siren-hoot mentioned above.

BENARES CANTT.
24th September 1947.

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5.—ON THE LEOPARD CAT. (*PRIONAILURUS
BENGALENSIS*)

(*With a photo*)

A few years ago, some friends of mine went home and left a young leopard cat aged 7 months for me to look after. I was pleased



Leopard Cat

to have this opportunity of making the acquaintance of so beautiful, slender and graceful a cat, and was keen to find out for myself whether

it was possible to tame these animals in captivity. It had been found with another (which had died of pneumonia when very young) near Dimapur in Assam, and had been brought up by the daughter of the family in the bungalow. It used to roam about the bungalow, and used to come when called for its food. But it could not be called tame, as it would not allow itself to be handled or even stroked.

After taking this cat over, I kept it for four months in my bungalow, and tried my utmost to make friends with it. But it was not having any. It grew more and more savage, and at feeding time it was extremely difficult to get food to it without getting attacked. So, most unfortunately, it had to be destroyed.

I wonder if anyone has ever succeeded in taming this creature?

About its breeding habits, I notice that Sterndale says that it is said to breed in May, and to have three or four kittens at a time. Whereas in the 'Wild Animals of the Indian Empire, Part III' published by you, it says 'It has 3 or 4 cubs in a litter. A kitten a month old was taken in August in the Nilgiris.' As far as Assam is concerned, the leopard cat aged 7 months which was given to me was born in August. But I once also got a kitten near Golaghat in Assam on March 26th, 1937 (two were found, but one died before reaching me). Is it not therefore probable that the leopard cat has two litters a year, as the Indian Jungle Cat and others are supposed to do?

Concerning the number of kittens, in each case two were brought, and as far as I know no more were found. But it is possible that there were more.

DOYANG T. E.,
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E. P. GEE

12th August 1947.

[There is no fixed rule as to how any species of animal reacts to conditions of captivity. It is largely a question of individual behaviour. An individual of a given species may remain fierce and resentful, another become tame and docile. All observers agree that the Leopard Cat is excessively savage and untameable. When caged, it usually remains by day, crouched in a corner and snarls at all who come near. But Blanford refers to one he saw in the London Zoo, which unconcerned, paced up and down its cage by day, came when called by its keeper and appeared thoroughly tame.

Little specific is known of the breeding seasons of most Indian animals even of the commonest species. Some apparently have fixed breeding seasons, while with others the young are produced in any month of the year. But there is usually a period when breeding activity is more marked. These periods again vary with latitude. Speaking generally, animals living in the higher altitudes of the Himalayas, produce their young early in spring or summer when food supplies are more plentifully available. In tropical lands where climatic conditions and food supplies remain more or less uniform—there is more elasticity in breeding seasons and in the periods when young are produced.—EDS.]